

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 IO-13 ISO-00 SSM-03 NEAE-00 CIAE-00

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FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 7387

INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMCONSUL JERUSALEM

USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

C O N F I D E N T I A L BEIRUT 1789

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PEPR LE US

SUBJ: CONVERSATION WITH DORY CHAMOUN - THE SITUATION IN LEBANON

1. DCM CALLED ON DORY CHAMOUN, SECRETARY GENERAL OF THE NATIONAL LIBERAL PARTY (NLP) ON MARCH 31. DURING APPROXIMATELY 45-MINUTE DISCUSSION, DORY MADE THE FOLLOWING REMARKS.

2. INFILTRATION OF PALESTINIAN SUPPORTERS. DORY CLAIMED THAT THE NLP HAD "POSITIVE" CONFIRMATION THAT THERE WERE 300 IRAQI REGULAR SOLDIERS, TRAINED IN MOUNTAIN FIGHTING, WHO WERE NOW STATIONED WITH THE PALESTINIANS IN NABATIYAH. IN ADDITION TO THIS GROUP, HE SAID THERE WERE APPROXIMATELY 800 OTHER IRAQI VOLUNTEERS WHO HAD ARRIVED DURING THE LAST TWO WEEKS. HE ESTIMATED THE TOTAL NUMBER OF "VOLUNTEERS" WHO HAD RECENTLY
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JOINTED THE PALESTINIANS IN LEBANON AT ABOUT 3,000, INCLUDING SOME JORDANIANS (DESPITE DENIALS BY THE JORDANIAN GOVERNMENT) AND EVEN SOME YEMENIS. DORY SAID THAT THE SYRIAN FORCES IN THE ADF HAD NOT REPEAT NOT COOPERATED WITH THE LEBANESE TO STEM THIS TIDE.

2. MAJOR HADDAD AND THE CHRISTIAN MILITIAS IN SOUTH

LEBANON. DORY SAID THAT MAJOR HADDAD HAD BEEN UNDER TREMENDOUS PRESSURE IN SOUTH LEBANON FOR THE PAST YEAR AND A HALF AND WAS NOW CLOSE TO A NERVOUS BREAKDOWN. ACCORDING TO DORY, HADDAD, WHO WAS BASICALLY A SHY PERSON, HAD NOT ONLY BEEN RESPONSIBLE FOR THE CHRISTIAN POPULATION IN GENERAL BUT ALSO HAD HIS OWN CHILDREN AND "NAGGING WIFE" WITH HIM IN MARJAYUN. DORY SAID THAT "WE ARE IN TOUCH WITH HADDAD, PRIMARILY TO SCOLD HIM." THE NLP AND KATAEB HAD SENT "SEVERAL HUNDRED" PEOPLE SOUTH SINCE THE ISRAELI ATTACK BUT THE NLP PEOPLE WERE, "WITH A FEW EXCEPTIONS," NATIVES OF THE SOUTH WHO WANTED TO RETURN HOME. REFERRING TO HADDAD'S RECENT ANNOUNCEMENT THAT HE WAS RECRUITING A MIXED SHIA-CHRISTIAN MILITIA, DORY SAID HE THOUGHT THIS WAS A GOOD IDEA. THERE HAVE ALWAYS BEEN "ANSAR" (PARA-MILITARY ELEMENTS) WORKING WITH THE REGULAR LEBANESE ARMY IN THE SOUTH AND HADDAD'S NEW MILITIA COULD PLAY THIS ROLE. DORY WELCOMED THE POSSIBILITY THAT THE LEBANESE ARMY MIGHT SEND SOME OFFICERS TO "WORK WITH" HADDAD BUT SAID THE GOL WOULD HAVE TO GO SLOWLY IN REPLACING HIM BECAUSE HE WAS A HERO IN THE REGION.

3. RELATIONS WITH UNIFIL. DORY SAID THE NLP WAS DOING NOTHING TO IMPEDE UNIFIL'S DEPLOYMENT IN SOUTH LEBANON BUT THEY WERE NOT VERY OPTIMISTIC ABOUT ITS USEFULNESS IN SOLVING LEBANON'S PRINCIPAL PROBLEM -- THE PRESENCE
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OF THE ARMED PALESTINIANS. WHAT THE NLP WOULD LIKE TO SEE, DORY SAID, WAS A UNIFIL STATIONED THROUGHOUT ALL OF LEBANON EITHER IN COOPERATION WITH OR IN PLACE OF THE SYRIAN-DOMINATED ADF. DORY SAID HE THOUGHT THE SYRIANS MIGHT AGREE TO THIS SINCE THEY WERE ALWAYS SAYING THAT THEY WERE UNDERTAKING A HEAVY BURDEN IN LEBANON FOR THE SAKE OF THE LEBANESE AND WOULD BE HAPPY TO PASS IT TO OTHERS OR GIVE IT UP AS SOON AS THEY COULD.

4. COMMENT: NLP HEADQUARTERS, WHERE BOTH DANY AND DORY CHAMOUN HAVE THEIR OFFICES, HAS BEEN SURROUNDED, SINCE THE FAYYIDIYAH INCIDENTS AND THEIR AFTERMATH, BY THREE SYRIAN GUN POSITIONS, INCLUDING ONE ARMED WITH ROCKETS. THE NLP, AND THE CHRISTIANS IN GENERAL, APPEAR TO BE VERY MUCH AWARE THAT THEIR RELATIONS WITH THE SYRIANS ARE UNEASY AND THAT THE SYRIANS ARE LOOKING FOR A CHANCE TO GET EVEN. ALTHOUGH THE LEBANESE CHRISTIANS MAY BE FISHING IN TROUBLED WATERS IN SOUTH LEBANON, WE DO NOT THINK THEY ARE LOOKING FOR TROUBLE NOW IN BEIRUT, WHERE THEY KNOW THAT THE SYRIANS AND THE PALESTINIANS WOULD BE ALLIED AGAINST THEM.
PARKER

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